

UW Whitewater Police



Social Media

Number:
41.2.116

No. Pages:
3

Special Instructions:

Approved By:
Chief Kiederlen

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1

I. Purpose

The purpose of this General Order is to provide guidelines for department employees concerning the release of information to social media sites in order to ensure the protection of the property, images and reputation of UW-Whitewater Police Department and its employees.

Additionally, this General Order will assist staff in working with social media sites and to coordinate the appropriate communication of timely and accurate information to support the mission and vision of UWWPD.

II. Definitions

Social Media: A broad term used to describe the wide spectrum of web-based sites that enable users to interact with one another, by facilitating the exchange of opinions, views, and video images.

Social Networking Site: Any social media site in which information is shared or exchanged. To include, but not limited to, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Twitter, blogs, wikis (e.g. Wikipedia, Wiki How, Wiki Answers), dating sites, photo-and video sharing sites (Snapchat, Flickr, You Tube), podcasts, or bulletin boards.

Blog: A self-published diary or commentary on a particular topic that may allow visitors to post responses, reactions, or comments. The term is short for "Web log".

Page: The specific portion of a social media website where content is displayed, and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.

Post: Content an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.

Profile: Profile - Information that a user provides about himself or herself on a social networking site.

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III. Policy

The UW-Whitewater Police Department (UWWPD) recognizes that the use of web-based social networking sites is a popular activity that can enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange; however, employees must be mindful that inappropriate postings regarding UWWPD will have a negative impact upon its relationship with the community. This directive addresses the impact that these sites can have for UWWPD and identifies the type of activities that are prohibited by our employees.

This policy is not meant to address one particular form of social media; rather social media in general, as advances in technology occur and new tools emerge.

This policy is not meant to stop free expression on personally maintained social media sites as long as it does not intentionally reflect unfavorably on UWWPD or the University.

IV. Procedure

- A. Employees must obtain permission from the Chief or his/her designee prior to representing UWWPD via a social media/networking site in the performance of an authorized duty.
- B. Where possible, each approved social media page shall include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and scope of the Department's presence on the website.
- C. Where possible, each approved social media page(s) should link to the Department's official website.
- D. Whether in the performance of an authorized duty or operating a personal device, employees shall not post, transmit, reproduce, and/or disseminate information (text, pictures, video, audio, etc.) to the internet or any other forum (public or private) that would tend to discredit or reflect unfavorably upon UWWPD or any other UW-Whitewater or State of Wisconsin employee.
- E. Employees are responsible for immediately notifying Management when they become aware of or have knowledge of a posting or any website or web page that violates the provisions of this policy; or any situation where information, pictures or data representing UWWPD is posted to an unapproved site.
- F. Employees will not disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to the University or UWWPD.
- G. Employees will act in a manner consistent with UWWPD's public image by upholding the value of respect for individuals, avoiding the use of UWWPD resources in a derogatory or unprofessional manner and refraining from making defamatory statements about employees, citizens, partners, or other agencies.
- H. Employees will not allow the use or maintenance of approved websites to interfere with their job duties and responsibilities.
- I. Using any electronic device (i.e. cell phones, laptops, smartphones, etc.), department issued or personal, to post, upload or download any department or job-related information to any social media outlet, is explicitly prohibited, unless it is a site approved through management. Examples included, but are not limited to, releasing or using: Confidential,

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sensitive, or copyrighted information to which you have access due to your employment with UWSPD. This includes: the UWSPD Patch and Badge or data from any past or ongoing criminal or administrative investigation.

- J. Employees are encouraged to exercise sound judgment on usage, maintenance and discretion in contributing to social media sites where information is available to numerous users. This is especially encouraged on personal sites to ensure a distinct separation between personal and organizational views.
- K. Nothing contained in this policy shall be construed to limit the legitimate exercise of free speech, including but not limited to written, graphic, or verbal expression.